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Weekly Situation Report on International Terrorism

3.5(c)

25 May 1976

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WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

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Montoneros on the Defensive in Argentina?

In February 1976, Argentine authorities captured several Montonero documents which show that the organization is on the defensive and is attempting to reorganize to better resist the government. According to the documents, the Montoneros recognize that the Argentine security forces have dealt them severe blows, particularly in the cities of the interior provinces. The Montoneros further recognize that government control of the interior will be inevitable, so they plan to confront the government in Buenos Aires Province, where they feel their chances are best. Because they feel that their organization in Buenos Aires is weak and in no condition to successfully combat the armed forces, the Montoneros are planning to send a significant number of their members into hiding to thwart the efforts of security elements to locate them. To that end the Montonero "tactical command" has ordered that an intensive effort be carried out to obtain legitimate documentation for the members going underground.

Along with this defensive operation, the Montoneros plan to continue to engage in some offensive actions to confront the military and reinforce the image of the Montonero organization. Although plans for these actions were not specific, another document revealed that in March and April, the Montoneros planned to conduct attacks against the police forces and business leaders and in May planned a campaign of "militant operations" at a national level. (During March and April there were numerous attacks on police, and several business executives were murdered by terrorists. For details see the 27 April issue.)

Because of their failures against the government, the documents reveal, the Montonero national council has been forced to take a critical look at their organizational structure and tactics. In a self-criticism session, the council severely denounced Roberto Quieto for allowing himself to be taken alive and without a struggle and for revealing information about the Montoneros. In the opinion of the council, Quieto acted selfishly by presuming that his high position gave him the right to try to utilize his rank and knowledge about the Montoneros to negotiate with the enemy.

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The national council not only was critical of Quieto, but it was also highly critical of itself. The council felt that the Montoneros had become bureaucratized and demilitarized to such an extent that the members lacked sufficient military training to conduct complicated terrorist operations. Further, the council felt that the national leadership had become so isolated that it lacked knowledge of the different Montonero regions and thus failed to produce a consistent, broad policy encompassing the entire organization.

To take care of this situation, the council decided to stress greater democratization of the organization to allow for more effective communication between the leadership and the rank and file. To keep the military competence of the membership at a high level, the council decided to re-emphasize military training and to plan at least one operation a year involving large numbers of troops. Finally, to improve security, the council decided to appoint a security officer for each of the regions and to see to it that every Montonero has a weapon in good operating condition, to be used to resist capture or to commit suicide if capture seems imminent.

Although the Montoneros may not have the capability to conduct sustained terrorist campaigns at the present time, this does not mean that they are incapable of taking any action. If they succeed in their reorganization plans they could prove to be a threat to the military government for some time to come. Further, if the military counterterrorist effort continues to be successful, the Montonero leadership may feel it is necessary to stage a spectacular operation in order to throw the military off balance and to shore up their flagging prestige. 3.5(c)

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NOTES

3.3(b)(1)

[redacted]

Reports of SA-7 Missiles in Argentina 3.3(b)(1) 3.3(b)(1)

[redacted] that Argentine terrorists have SA-7 missiles in their possession. [redacted] the missiles, allegedly smuggled from Chile to Argentina, had been used to shoot down an Argentine aircraft.

[redacted] there are between three and 30 SA-7s in the hands of Argentine terrorists, [redacted] The SA-7 is a shoulder-launched heat-seeking missile designed for use by ground troops against tactical strike aircraft. 3.3(b)(1) 3.3(b)(1)

Although these reports cannot be completely discounted, there is no solid evidence that any Latin American terrorist group, including the Argentine terrorists, has SA-7 missiles.

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[redacted]

Target: BUSINESS EXECUTIVES

Place: Argentina

Date: Unknown

In April and May there were reports that the Montoneros plan to kidnap business executives, including Americans, in order to obtain funds. [redacted] 3.5(c) 3.5(c)

[redacted]

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